

[Blue Hat Man](#)

| Blue Hat Man sez: The people — united — undefeatable.

- [Home](#)
- [About](#)
- [Contact Blue Hat Man](#)

Monday January 6th 2014

Search

Categories

- [Being in Business](#)
- [Dolls](#)
- [Food Writing](#)
 - [Cookbook Reviews](#)
 - [Recipe Road Test](#)
- [Garden Writing](#)
- [Me and My Wood](#)
- [Naked Book Club](#)
- [Say Ahhhhhh](#)

Interesting Sites

- [Anissa Helou](#)
- [Dorie Greenspan](#)
- [Launchismo](#)
- [OWF](#)

Insider

- [Register](#)
- [Log in](#)

Archives

February 2013

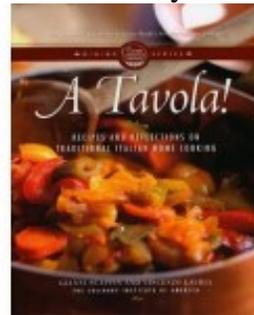


[Cookbook Backlist: Three books worth a look](#)

Three books left from last season, sitting on the edge of my desk. I've been picking through them in the kitchen, seeing which recipes or which foodways are likely to stick. I am as guilty as anyone for recycling the same half dozen dishes week in and week out and calling it dinner. (My latest fave – call me lazy – is to put on a pot of brown rice, bone out and flatten a couple of chicken breasts, then grill those on the stove top cast iron grill with a veg in the microwave, all of it seeming to come together in 10 minutes.) Weekends, I find, are for more thoughtful, more adventurous cooking. Somehow it all works, and new cookbooks are an always welcome stimulus.

A Tavola, Recipes and Reflections on Traditional Italian Home Cooking by Gianni Scappin and Vincenzo Lauria. Lebhar-Friedman Books. \$29.95

It's hard getting past the antipasti chapter. Always a good sign. And it's pan-regional antipasti. The greatest hits of antipasti. In fact, *A Tavola* could be called the greatest hits of Italian home cooking. And this from the Culinary Institute of America where the two authors are instructors. That they come from opposite ends of



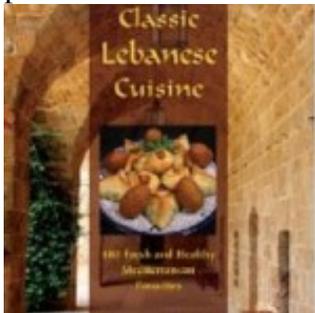
Italy only helps the material rise above any overt regional bias.

Sweet and sour eggplant, striped bass salad with white beans and pesto, warm large shrimp with fennel and arugula dressing, lightly pickled fried squid – why do I need to go any farther? Can't I just sit down and tuck a napkin under my chin?

Chapters in *A Tavola* (Antipasti e Zuppe aside) include Pizzas and Breads: Polenta Rice and Pasta; Main Dishes and Accompaniments; and Digestives, Liqueurs, and Desserts. Each chapter is stuffed with supportive information – a discussion of Italian cheeses, for instance, or olive oils, or pasta variations. For anyone steeped in Italian cuisine, this will all be old news. But for anyone just getting a leg up, this is a valuable text. The bottom line is the result at the table. Follow these recipes, build a meal, and you will, in fact, bring traditional Italian home cooking into your own home.

Classic Lebanese Cuisine by Chef Kamal Al-Faqih. Three Forks, an imprint of Globe Pequot Press. \$24.95

I have this big event coming up, and I was thinking along the lines of over-the-top macaroni and cheese and Cajun meatloaf. You with me? But then I picked up this copy of *Classic Lebanese Cuisine*. And the rain on my parade came in the form of hummus and baba ghanouj, tabouleh and fried cauliflower with tahini

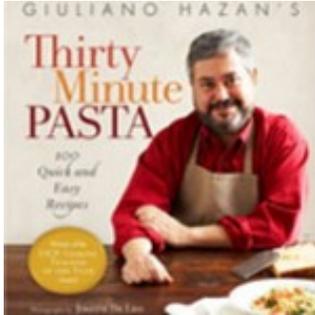


sauce, spicy red pepper and walnut spread, roasted lemon-garlic chicken, stuffed squash and grape leaves, fava beans with garlic and lemon, and home made baklava. So I find myself setting aside that

which will clog everyone's arteries for food that will make anyone want to go home and have sex on soft sheets. I swear. Food that lights you up. Food that leaves you both sated and healthy. Chef Kamal (you can find out more about him at www.cookingwithkamal.com) takes you right to the heart of Lebanese cuisine, and the best of the Mediterranean diet. There's no going back.

Thirty Minute Pasta, 100 Quick and Easy Recipes by Giuliano Hazan. Stewart, Tabori, and Chang. \$27.50

One hundred quick and easy recipes is saying something. But consider the source. Giuliano, son of Marcella. Now, I am sure, like any son, he looks forward to the day his own name rises of its own accord. But the unique quality of growing up under Marcella's wing is this: The recipe as written and described will deliver the dish as it is meant to taste. That was Marcella's great gift, and it is Giuliano's as well. Sounds simple, I know. But pay attention to this book and you won't find yourself serving the wrong sauce with the wrong pasta ever again.



Chapters break out into Pasta Soups, Vegetarian Pastas, Seafood Pastas, and Meat Pastas. So, yes, there is a Pasta e Fagioli recipe – bean and pasta soup, and it is simple, direct, and delicious. Giuliano doesn't shy away from butter where it is needed, but this is a healthy book, from a healthy diet. Spaghettoni with fresh tomato, olive oil, and basil? C'mon. Count me in. Linguine with shrimp and porcini? Where do I apply for the taster's gig?

The thing is, working your way through this book, you get very comfortable with producing delicious dishes in less than 30 minutes. And if that doesn't put an end to takeout, I don't know what will.

Share and Enjoy:

Post Published: 10 March 2010

Author: Schuyler

Found in section: [Cookbook Reviews](#), [Food Writing](#)

Tags: [cookbooks](#), [Italian cooking](#), [Lebanese cooking](#), [recipes](#)

Previous Topic: [Support Haiti](#)

Next Topic: [Whole-Grains Never Looked So Good](#)

Leave a Reply

Name (required)

Mail (will not be published) (required)

Website



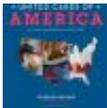
Submit Comment

Latest Topics



[Archer Barron, »](#)

Archer Barron is rebuilding his life after...



[United Cakes »](#)

United Cakes of America By Warren...



[Whole-Grains »](#)

Good to the Grain, Baking with Whole-Grain...



[Cookbook »](#)

Three books left from last season, sitting...



[Support Haiti »](#)

Support Haiti...



[Slacker »](#)

There was a time, oh, about six weeks ago...



[The New »](#)

For food magazines, Thanksgiving rolls...



[Cooking the »](#)

Grady Spears has staked out the Texas...



[Recipe Road »](#)

This just in: Cowboys in Florida eat Cuban...



[Tomato Soup: »](#)

First of all, you want that gourmet type...

-
- [Register](#)
- [Log in](#)

Powered by [WordPress](#) Copyright © 2014 Blue Hat Man All rights reserved News Magazine Theme 640 designed by [antisocialmediallc.com](#)